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ABSTRACT

The 20th century has brought many demographic changes to the United States. This booklet briefly relates some of those changes and provides many charts and graphs to illustrate the changes graphically. The century has been one of population growth, but the rate of growth has slowed since the 1950s. The population is mobile, with more than two out of five people changing their place of residence every five years. There are now more young singles, more divorced, more children in single-parent homes, and more widows. More mothers work outside the home than ever before. Average house size has increased, and more people now own their own home though the cost of doing so has increased also. Life expectancy has risen, largely due to extraordinary progress in reducing illness, but medical costs have soared. Each generation in the United States has so far achieved a higher level of education than the one before. Worker productivity has increased along with wages. More women have entered the work force, but most still earn substantially less than men. Blacks have made significant gains, but are still substantially less well off than their white counterparts. There are more elderly now, and their economic well-being has improved. Advances have been made in the war on poverty, but these have slowed recently. A growing middle class has higher earnings and larger assets, and recreation has become not an option, but a vital ingredient in good health. A 39-item bibliography is included. (JB)

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# THEN AND NOW

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The Conference Board and the U.S. Bureau of the Census

**BUREAU OF THE CENSUS**

**THE CONFERENCE BOARD**
**1916-1986**

# HOW WE LIVE

## THEN AND NOW

**Fabian Linden**
The Conference Board

**Paul Ryscavage**
U.S. Bureau of the Census

A joint study by the **U.S. Bureau of the Census** and the **Consumer Research Center**, The Conference Board.

**U.S. Department of Commerce**
**Malcolm Baldrige**, Secretary

**The Conference Board**
**James T. Mills**, President

November 1986
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# *FOREWORD*

Writing in his autobiography in 1904, Henry Adams predicted: "At the rate of progress since 1800, every American who lived into the year 2000 would know how to control unlimited power. He would think in complexities unimaginable to an earlier mind. He would deal with problems altogether beyond the range of earlier society. To him the Nineteenth Century would stand on the same plane with the Fourth—equally childlike—and he would only wonder how both of them, knowing so little, and so weak in force, should have done so much." This extraordinary forecast was made when we were still in the gaslight era, when the prime source of energy was steam and local transportation was literally horsepower.

This was the time we began digging the Panama Canal. The time when Theodore Roosevelt was elected President and the teddy bear was launched

and named in his honor. It was a time when the first automobile was driven coast to coast in a mere 65 days, when the speed limit in the U.K. was set at 20 m.p.h. It was a time when the ten hour work day was established in France and when the steerage rate for transportation of immigrants to the U.S. was set at ten dollars per head. It was also a time when a woman was arrested in New York City for smoking a cigarette in public.

The fact that Mr. Adams' magnificent vision emerged from that era was remarkable. But just as remarkable, given where we are today, our dreams of tomorrow can be even more ambitious and their fulfillment even more likely.

In these times when we are so compulsively disposed to measuring our fortunes by the latest quarterly GNP growth rate figures, a long look into the past to see how far we have travelled at least broadly suggests where we might possibly be in the future. It is with this assumption—that past is prologue—that this publication was undertaken. The celebration of the Statue of Liberty's 100th anniversary provided the appropriate moment. This year also marks The Conference Board's 70th year anniversary. America's history in this century is a most compelling story. It is a story that should be told.

This publication was prepared as a joint effort by the U.S. Bureau of the Census and the The Conference Board. It is an example of how government and business can coordinate their experience and special skills, to produce an authoritative report of general public interest. The interpretation of events expressed in this publication is not necessarily, in every instance, endorsed by both organizations.

JOHN G. KEANE
*Director*
*Bureau of the Census*

JAMES T. MILLS
*President*
*The Conference Board*

# *PEOPLE*

*"We the people. . ."*

Constitution of the United States

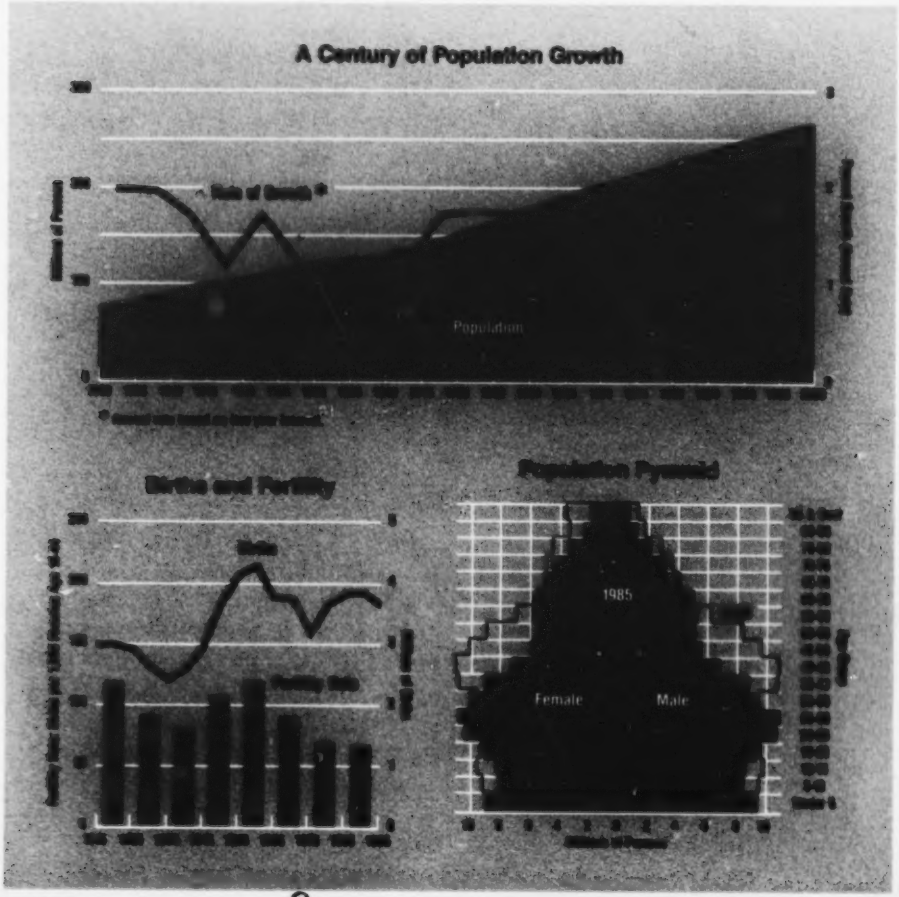
Nineteen hundred and fifteen was a milestone year for the U.S. The nation's population reached the 100 million mark. We made rapid gains in the early years of the new century. About one-third of all women bore five or more children and immigrants had arrived at the rate of nearly one million a year. However, in the turbulent years between the two great wars (1915-1945), our rate of growth dropped precipitously. Congress clamped down on immigration in the early Twenties, and in the depression Thirties the birth rate went into a stark decline.

Following World War II, there was a new surge in population growth. Large families were again the mode—although they were not quite as large as in Victorian times. In the great birth boom years of 1945-1960, close to 60 million babies were born, almost twice as many as in the preceding fifteen years. This abrupt swing from very few to very many births made for some sizeable shifts in the age structure of the population—changes which are having and will continue to have far-reaching economic and social consequences.

During the 1950's and for some time after that, relatively few people came of working age because of the low births some twenty years earlier. This sparse generation could move with relative ease into good and rewarding jobs. They married, had children early, and built large families. In contrast, the baby boomers, who flooded the labor market in the 1970's, encountered a tougher competitive environment and found that jobs were not nearly as plentiful. Today's young adults are marrying and having children at a much later age than their parents. Almost certainly, they will have smaller families.

The nation's population is growing older. Early in the next century, a third of the nation will be over age 50, compared to only a quarter today.

Demographers expect the population to grow by only two-thirds of one percent a year as we approach the end of this century. This will be the slowest growth rate ever in U.S. history.


A Century of Population Growth
Population
1985
Female
Male

# *PLACES*

*"Always roaming with a hungry heart."*

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

We are a nation on the move. In a five-year period, more than two out of every five Americans change their place of residence. Escalating living standards, the lure of new job opportunities, and changes in the size of the family are the prime catalysts of this extraordinary mobility. Four major technological developments have facilitated this movement: agricultural science, the automobile, the airplane and air conditioning.

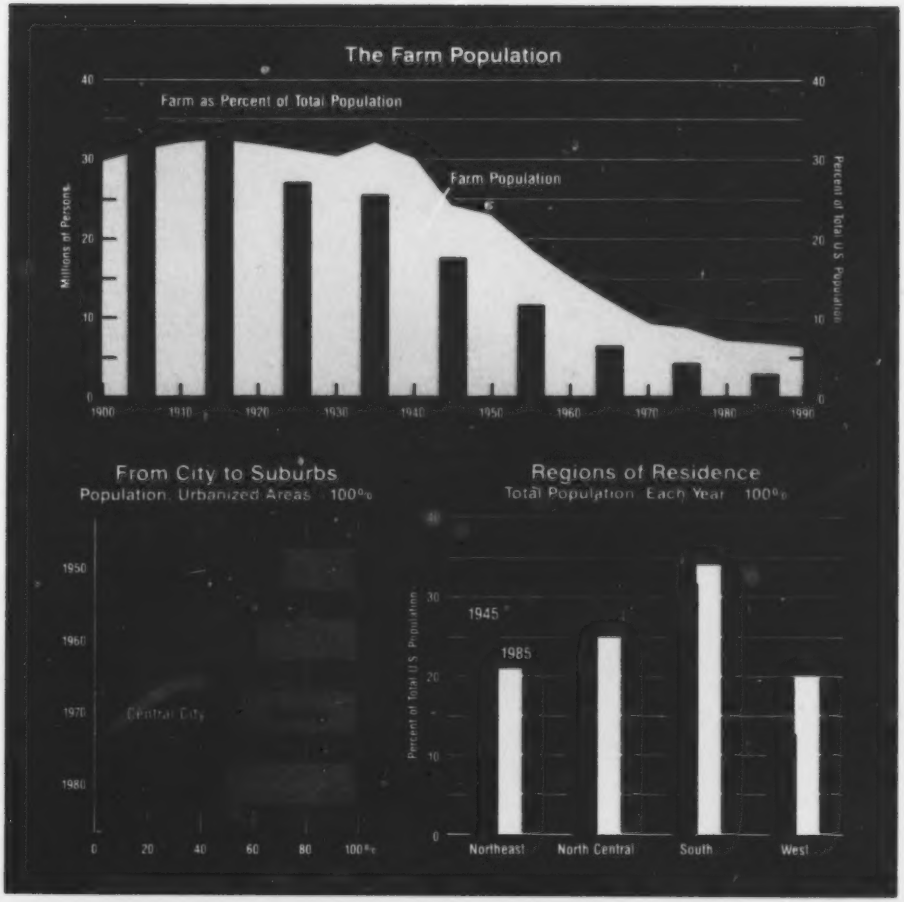
The extensive reshuffling of America's population is, in part, the result of awesome increases in farm productivity. While 35% of all Americans lived on farms early this century, today it is less than 3 percent.

In the years of the great immigration to America, already-large cities began to swell into metropolises. Wave after wave of foreigners arrived, most of them clustering in cities where their predecessors had settled. In the early 1930's, one out of every four persons lived in a big city, compared with less than one in five today.

Prosperity led many big-city residents to dream of a landscaped home in the suburbs, and the automobile made it possible. In this century Americans moved from the farm to the city and then from the city to the suburb.

People began to desert the older economic areas of the North and Midwest and head for the warmer regions of the country: the South and West. A rich variety of social and economic currents spurred this mobility. The movement to the South, for example, was generated by rapid economic expansion, and facilitated by the comfort of air conditioning. The powerful blend of economic growth and inviting climate has made the West a continuing magnet. While only one out of ten people lived in the West half a century ago, the figure is now one out of five and rising.

With the shifting fortunes of many industries and the ever developing new technologies, it is likely that we will continue to be a nation on the move.


The Farm Population
Farm as Percent of Total Population
Farm Population
Millions of Persons
Percent of Total U.S. Population
40
30
20
10
0
1900
1910
1920
1930
1940
1950
1960
1970
1980
1990
From City to Suburbs
Population, Urbanized Areas = 100%
1950
1960
1970
1980
Central City
0
20
40
60
80
100%
Regions of Residence
Total Population, Each Year = 100%
Percent of Total U.S. Population
1945
1985
Northeast
North Central
South
West

# THE FAMILY

*"The family is one of life's masterpieces."*

George Santayana

The vast majority of Americans—almost three out of every four men, women and children—live in husband-wife households. This is not as many as in the not-too-distant past, yet certainly the nuclear family is not, as is sometimes suggested, "fading away."

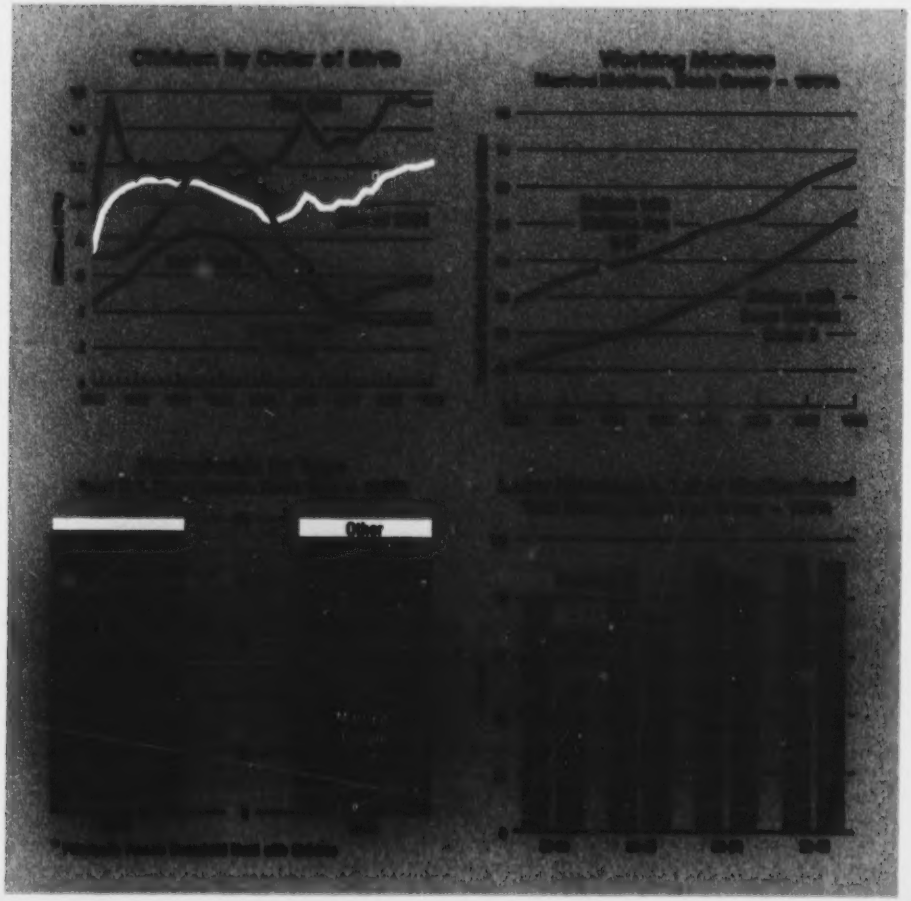
But there have been deep and enduring changes in the way we live. There are more young singles, more divorced, more children in single-parent homes and more widows. Now, one in four homes consists of a person living alone, in contrast to about one out of ten thirty years ago.

The typical husband-wife family with children is also becoming smaller with the decline in the fertility rate. Since the mid-1960s, the number of U.S. households has grown considerably faster than the nation's population.

Perhaps the most profound change in family life has been the transformation of America into a land of working mothers. A majority of married women are now performing triple roles—as mothers, spouses and employees. Merely forty years ago fewer than one out of six married women with children worked outside the home, but today more than three out of every five are earning a paycheck.

The flow of mothers into the labor force began in the early sixties, as the U.S. economy was experiencing a particularly robust era of growth. This suggests that the mass movement of women into the work force was driven at least as much by choice as by necessity. The education and liberation of the American woman has changed the way we live.

Some have raised the question of whether the community will benefit more from children being mothered full time, or from women expanding their horizons beyond the confines of the home. It is a fact, however, that the mother who remains at home is now in the minority. Less than two out of every five American women with children are still full-time homemakers.



# *HOUSING*

*"A comfortable house. . . ranks immediately after health and a good conscience."*

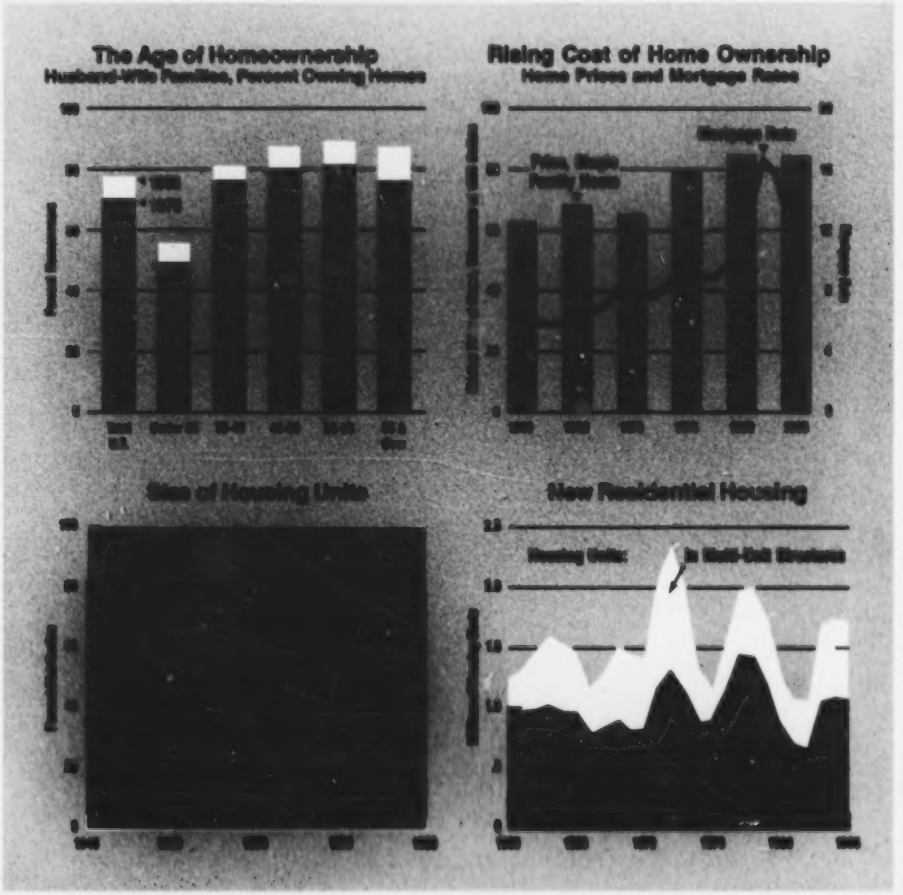
Sydney Smith

Owning one's home has become the prime aspiration of the American dream. For most of our history we have been a nation of renters. In 1950 only about half of all husband-wife families owned their homes. Today, three out of four are owners. The birth explosion and the economic prosperity following World War II fueled record home construction. Residential building activity accelerated further in the 1970's as children born in the great birth boom came of age and began forming their own families.

The boom in housing has been both recent and widespread. About one-quarter of all the dwelling units in the U.S. have been built during the last 15 years. This has made for a considerable upgrading in the quality of the average American home. The Government's 1940 Census of Housing reported that about half of all homes did not have full plumbing facilities, and that a large number of homes were dilapidated and in need of major repairs. The latest Census shows that few homes lack adequate plumbing and that an insignificant number are in need of major repairs.

While family size has been shrinking, the number of rooms in the average house has been increasing. During the last 20 years, the number of housing units with seven or more rooms has doubled. Such units now account for over a fifth of all homes. Meanwhile, the size of the average household has declined from 3.3 to 2.7 persons.

But the cost of both homes and mortgages has rocketed in recent years, climbing much faster than the general cost of living. This has made it much more difficult for many young people to own their homes. Recent developments, however, have improved the housing outlook. Interest rates have declined substantially. Also, the number of people who will be reaching home-buying age will soon begin to taper off because of the drop in births in the early 1960's.


The Age of Homeownership
Husband-Wife Families, Percent Owning Homes
Rising Cost of Home Ownership
Home Prices and Mortgage Rates
Mortgage Rate
Size of Housing Units
New Residential Housing

# HEALTH

*"The first wealth is health."*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

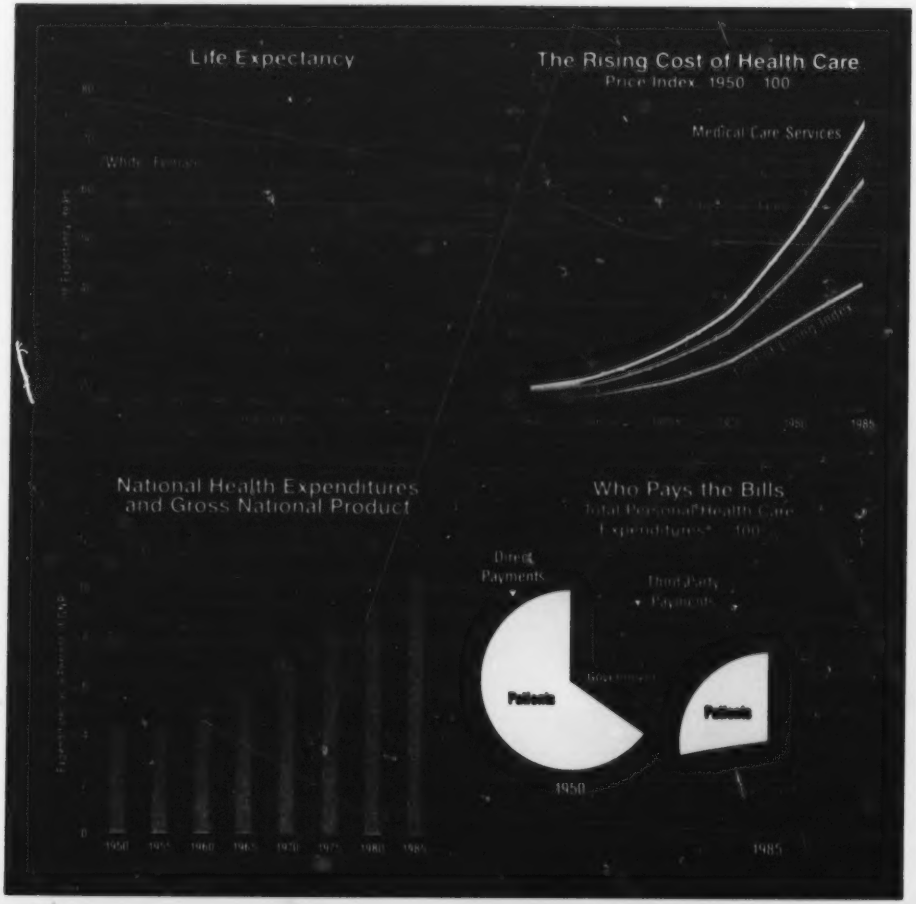
The American baby born last night has a life expectancy of about 75 years, 15 years longer than its grandparents. This historical advance is due largely to a decline in the infant mortality rate, and to the virtual elimination of many devastating infectious diseases.

Rising longevity is also the result of big changes in the way we live. Technology has freed millions from jobs that posed daily dangers to their lives. American health care, with its growing emphasis on preventative medicine, has been made steadily more accessible. These changes are underscored by our passion for physical fitness and healthful foods.

While we have made extraordinary progress in reducing illness, soaring health care expenditures have provoked national concern. Health care, which absorbed about 5% of Gross National Product in the 1950's, is now consuming 10 percent.

There are three major reasons for the surge in medical costs: new and expensive technologies, an aging population, and the greater availability of health care. The Government's Medicare program expanded rapidly, and twice as many people as three decades ago are now covered by health care insurance provided by their employers. An estimated 85% of the population have some health insurance. Still, this leaves some 35 million Americans with no coverage at all.

Inflation has been a most pernicious factor in spiraling health expenditures. A major reason is that medical-care payments have been extensively shifted from the responsibility of the patient, to third parties—insurance companies and the government—which now pay almost three-fourths of health costs. But the U.S. health care system is undergoing radical changes. Bills presented to third parties, once routinely paid, are now being closely scrutinized. There is a determined effort to contain health costs without compromising the quality of care.


Life Expectancy
The Rising Cost of Health Care
Price Index 1950 100
Medical Care Services
National Health Expenditures
and Gross National Product
Who Pays the Bills
Direct
Payments
Third Party
Payments
Patients
Patients
1950
1985

# EDUCATION

*"Education is the best provision for old age."*

Aristotle

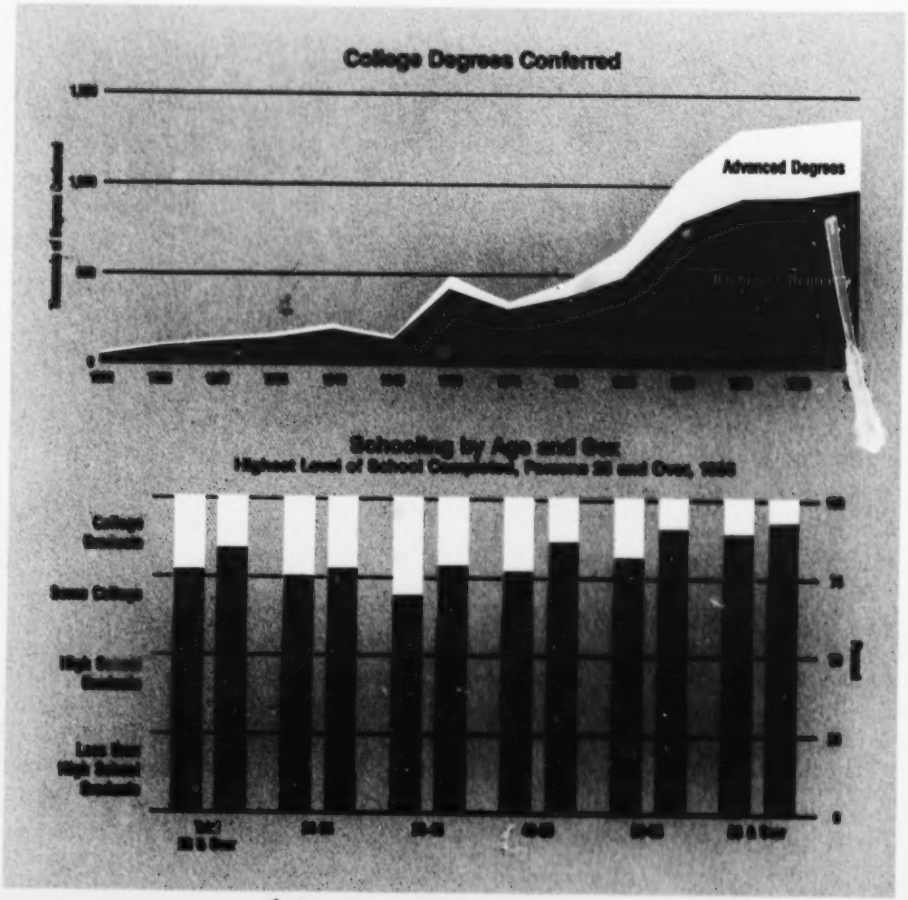
Each generation of Americans achieves a higher level of education than the one before. About half of all young people today spend at least some time in college compared to only one in four in their parents' era. In the last two decades alone the number of college degrees awarded in the U.S. has approximately doubled.

Increasing affluence, rising aspirations, and society's need for a better trained work force have combined to escalate the general level of educational attainment. Also more schooling means more pay. In the course of a lifetime, a man with a college degree earns 50% more than one with only a high school diploma.

Recently, reports of declines in the quality of education have generated widespread debate. There is growing concern with a decline in the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic and also with falling student achievement test scores. However, most young people today feel that they should have the chance to enter college, and many of the nation's communities are making this aspiration possible. As relatively more people stay in school longer it may well be that the ability of the average student has declined.

Definitely not declining, however, are educational costs. College tuition fees have continued to soar, rising much faster than overall living costs. There is also a relatively new development. As more college-trained people enter the work force, competition for career jobs is becoming keener and starting salaries less rewarding. The heavy financial burden of tuition and less certainty of job opportunities have led some observers to fear that fewer people will wish to pursue a higher education in the future.

It is highly probable, however, that more people in the future than in the past will continue to acquire more schooling. Education is still the primary American way of achieving upward mobility.


College Degrees Conferred
Advanced Degrees
Schooling by Age and Sex

# WORK

"*Work makes life sweet.*"

Old German Proverb

The American economic miracle is best expressed in a single word: productivity. The output of the average U.S. worker more than doubled in the first half of this century. It more than doubled again in the last 35 years.

Although we are working fewer hours, we are producing three times as much as our grandfathers. Technology, investment, modern management, a versatile work force and old fashioned Yankee ingenuity have all contributed to this alchemy.

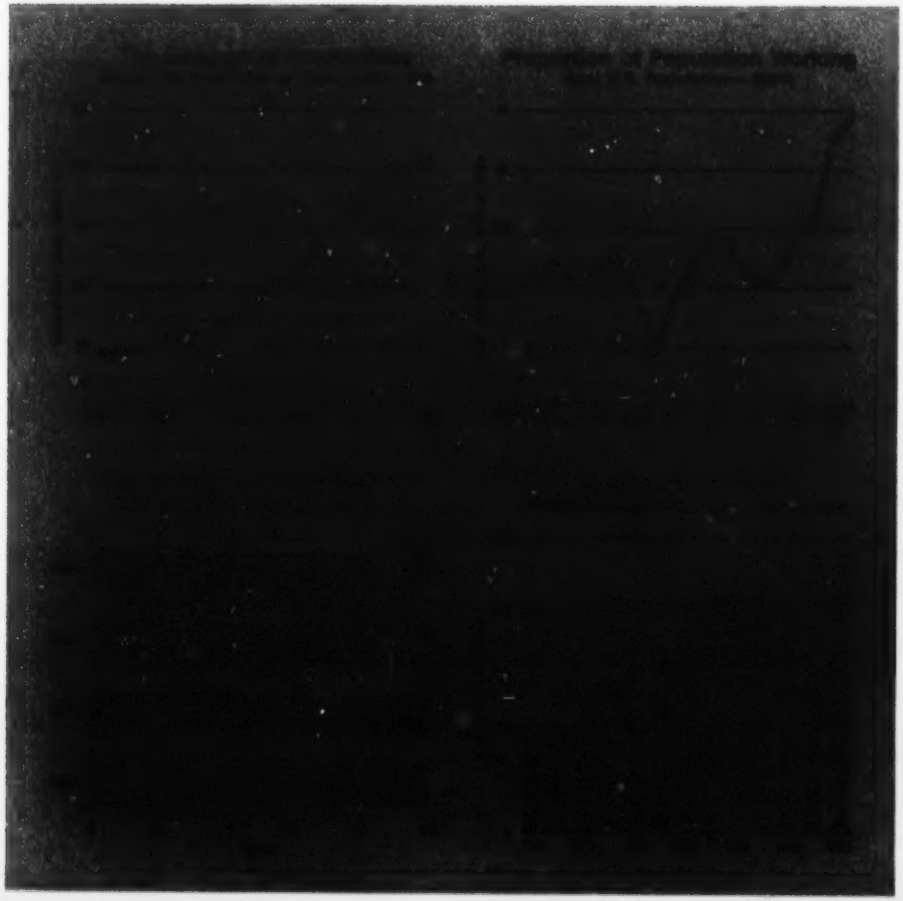
During the early years of this century, most people worked a minimum of 50 hours a week, and many toiled much longer. Today, the typical factory worker works a 40-hour week.

Technological breakthroughs continue to relieve millions of people from the burden of heavy physical labor. As late as the 1920's, more than half the American work force not employed in agriculture were blue collar workers. Today, the figure is well under one third.

Not only are we working fewer hours in more pleasant jobs, but rising productivity has also made possible substantially higher wages. In today's buying power, the average factory worker in the 1920's earned little more than $3.00 an hour, compared to about $9.50 now.

The gains in real earnings have been a powerful economic stimulus. More people buying more things have created more jobs. A rising proportion of the population joined the labor force, especially in recent years as birth boomers came of working age and millions of women went to work. The number of people earning a paycheck during the last two decades has jumped by 50%, or by twice as much as the U.S. population. This has made for a further improvement in living standards.

Recently, U.S. productivity has been growing slowly, stifled largely by whirlwind inflation, high interest rates, and other circumstances. When these problems are contained, productivity is likely to resume its long-term growth pace, given the continuing and imposing advances of technology.



# WOMEN

*"Who knows what women can be when they are finally free to become themselves."*

Betty Friedan

The mass movement of women into the mainstream of the nation's economic, political and intellectual activities is one of this century's most remarkable stories.

Early in this century, less than one in four were in the labor force. Most of these women were single and most worked as domestics and clerks or in factories and on farms. The Executive Suite was forbidden territory, an unofficial but rigid taboo. Social restraints kept women from viewing anything other than housework as their destiny.

In the 1920's, however, a large wave of women began to enter the labor force. But this movement was abruptly interrupted in the depression-plagued 1930's. Later, during World War II, millions of women were compelled to work, performing many jobs that were previously the exclusive domain of men. While women's work experience during the War was temporary, it was a resounding harbinger of things to come. Today, three out of five working-age women are earning a paycheck.

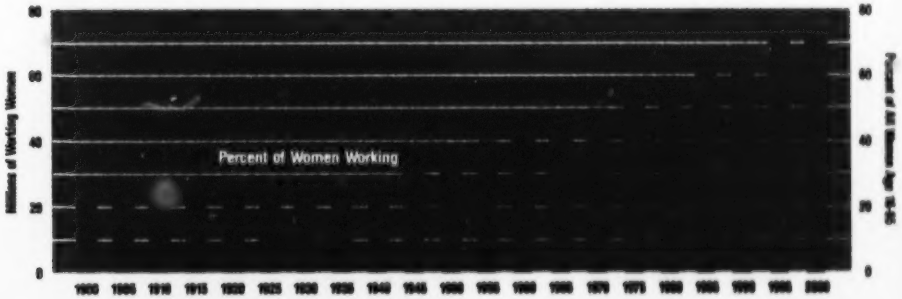
Education has been a vital ladder for women, elevating millions into a wide variety of professional jobs. As recently as 1960, American colleges and universities were predominately male preserves. Only one-third of all students were female. Today, half of all college students are women. The gender gap in education is vanishing.

Slowly, but inexorably, women are advancing into professional and managerial occupations. Three formidable forces—education, feminism and Federal Law—have combined to topple many traditional barriers. The result is not only more jobs for women but more rewarding jobs.

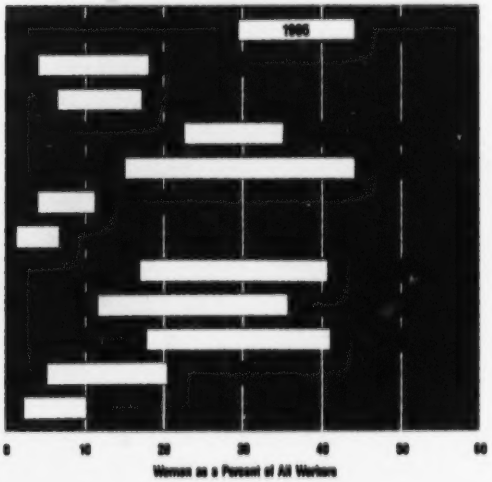
However, women still earn less than men, substantially less. Female professional executives receive only two-thirds the pay of males. Such differences also prevail in many other occupations.

While women have broken down many barriers, parity in pay continues to be elusive.

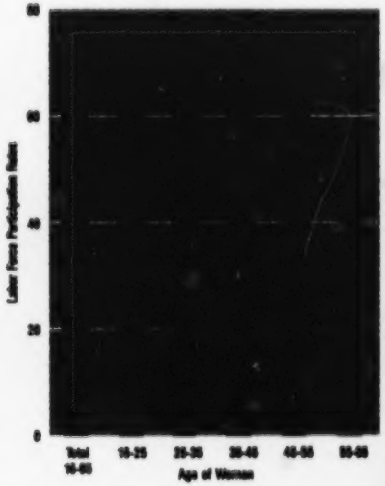
## Women at Work




## Females in Selected Occupations




## The Age of Working Women



# BLACKS

*"We shall overcome. . ."*

Martin Luther King, Jr.

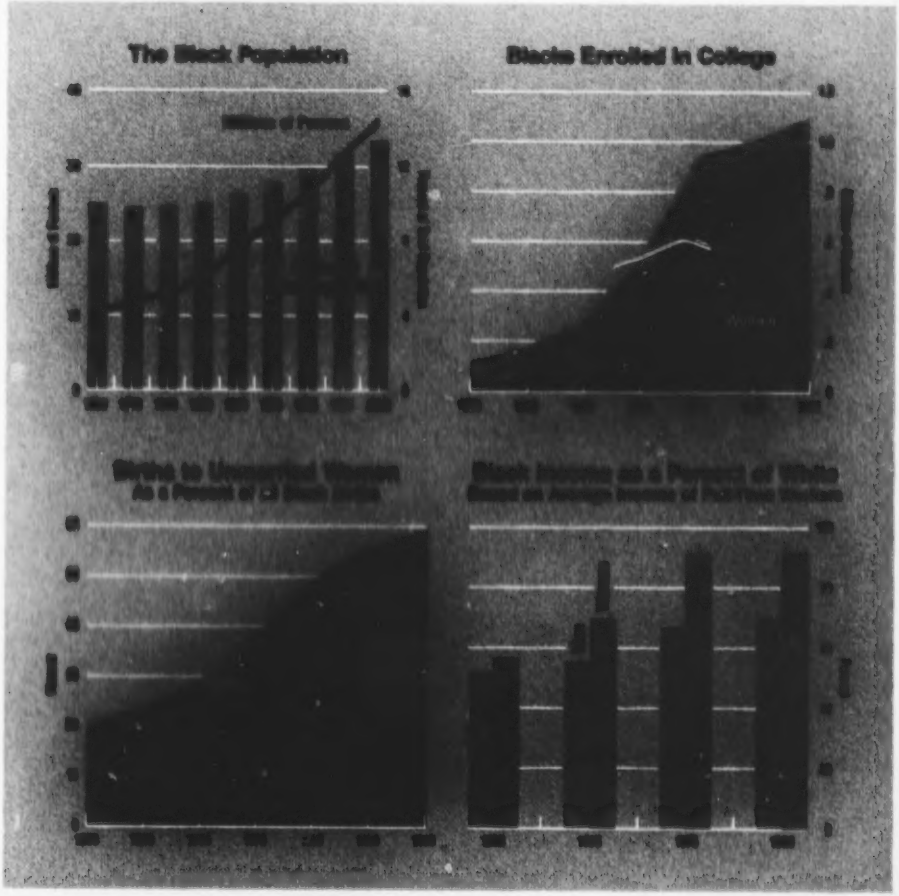
Barely 40 years ago, black Americans fought in a segregated Army in defense of the free world. We have come a long way since then, but there is still a long way to go. By every major measure of well-being—income, jobs, homes, education, health, longevity—blacks are still substantially less well off than their white compatriots.

In recent years there have been a number of developments which are severely aggravating the social and economic conditions within the black community. A majority of black children are born to unmarried mothers, frequently teenagers. Further, a large number of blacks are falling out of the mainstream of our economic life. Close to one out of every four young black men is unemployed.

But, there are also some very positive currents of change. In a brief time span blacks have achieved a considerable improvement in their economic conditions. Thirty years ago, the black male in a full-time job earned only three-fifths as much as his white countryman. Today he earns almost three-quarters as much. Black women have made even greater strides in closing the income gap with whites.

A significant black middle class has emerged over the years. About one-third of all black couples now have incomes of more than $30,000 a year, and two-thirds of all black couples own their own homes. Many young blacks of both sexes have made stirring educational gains. Only 20 years ago, about a third of a million blacks were enrolled in the nation's colleges and universities. Today, more than a million black men and women are pursuing a higher education. While total college enrollment in the U.S. has doubled during the last two decades, black enrollment has increased over three times.

Among this country's black leadership, and in black families, education has become an urgent priority. Locked in this single trend is a powerful promise for the future.


The Black Population
Blacks Enrolled in College

# THE ELDERLY

*"The tragedy of old age is not that one is old, but that one is young."*

Oscar Wilde

Modern medicine has given us a new generation. Scientific advances and increasing knowledge of diet and the importance of physical fitness have contributed to an increase in our life span and to a better quality of life in the later years. While the nation's adult population has nearly doubled since the end of World War II, the number of those over age 65 has nearly tripled.

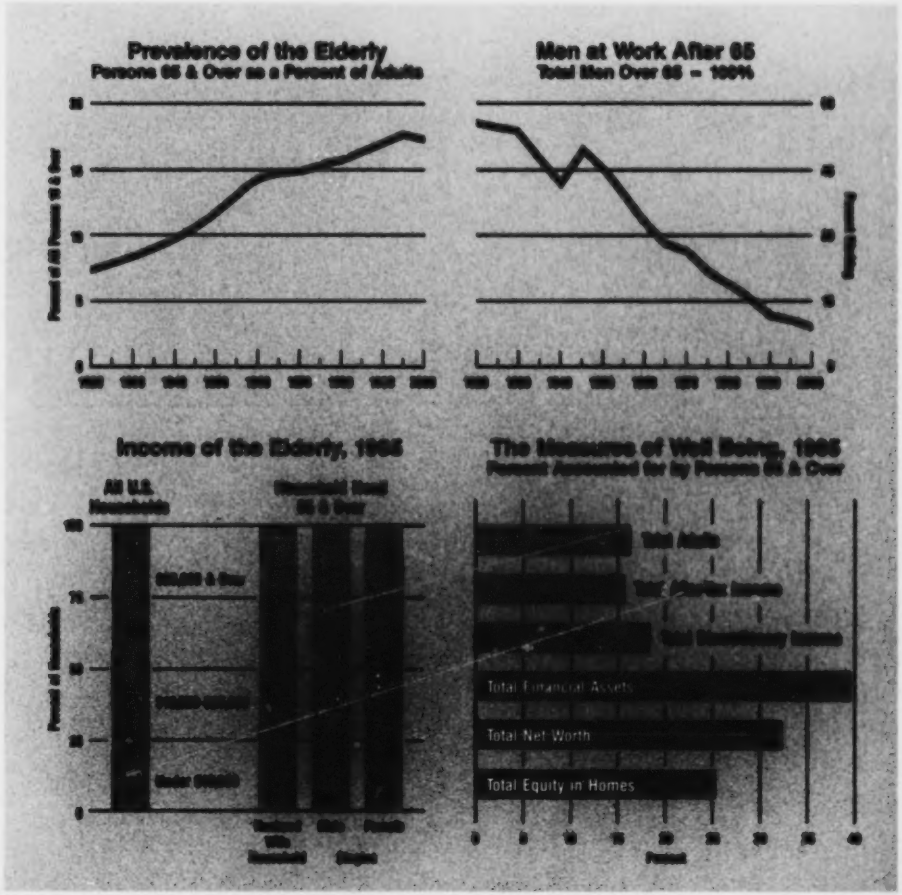
Until not so long ago most of our elderly lived in insecure and frequently dreary circumstances. At the turn of the century 60% of all men over 65 were still working, and by 1940 the figure was about 40%. Today, just over 15% of men over 65 are in the labor force.

While proportionally fewer older people continue to work, the economic well-being of the elderly has improved substantially. Twenty-five years ago, in the U.S. Government's first study of poverty, a third of all those 65 and older were classified as poor—well above the national average. Today, 12% of this country's over-65 are poor—less than the national figure.

Only in fairly recent times was it possible for many people to earn enough during their working lives to allow for a comfortable retirement. Those who began to work after World War II experienced almost non-stop economic growth and steadily rising affluence. Householders over 65 now account for a fifth of the nation's homes but for an imposing two-fifths of the nation's total personal financial assets.

While today's elderly are a good deal better off than any preceding generation, many older Americans still live in precarious circumstances, particularly women. Two out of every five elderly women—over 6 million—live alone. A quarter of these women are living below the poverty level.

With almost all Americans today participating in the Social Security program, and with many millions also covered by other pension plans, an ever larger number of people can expect to have a reasonably secure later life.


Prevalence of the Elderly
Persons 65 & Over as a Percent of Adults
Men at Work After 65
Total Men Over 65 = 100%
Income of the Elderly, 1985
All U.S. Households
Households Head 65 & Over
The Measures of Well Being, 1985
Total Financial Assets
Total Net Worth
Total Equity in Homes

# POVERTY

*"Poverty is a great enemy of human happiness."*

Samuel Johnson

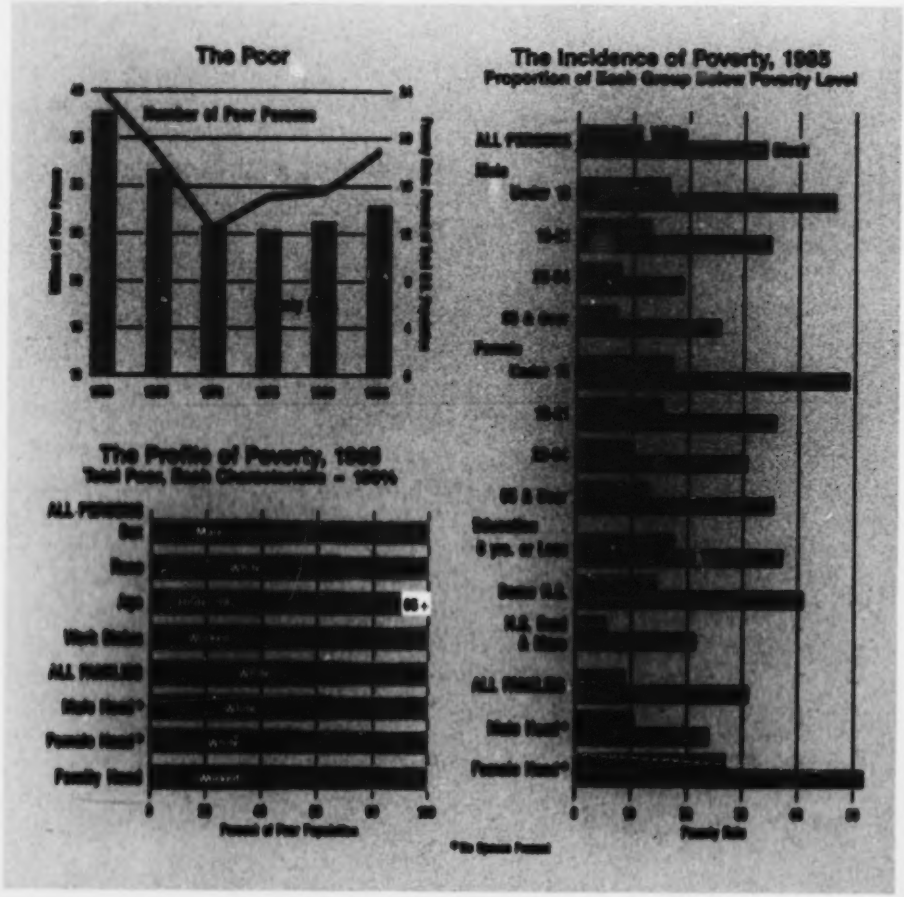
The elimination of poverty has been an historical American aspiration, transcending partisan politics. In the 1928 Presidential campaign, Herbert Hoover announced that the U.S. was "nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land." Nine years later, President Franklin Roosevelt saw "one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished."

By the early 1960's, about one in five Americans was poor. Today, one in seven lives in poverty. But most of the success in curtailing poverty was accomplished during the prosperous and socially stormy 1960's and the early years of the 1970's. Since then, the nation's economic growth has slackened, and there has been less improvement in this country's war on poverty over the past decade.

There has been, in fact, a sharp rise recently in the number of poor families headed by women, in part because there are so many more young women in the population, and in part because of high unemployment among the young. Women and children are accounting for a distressingly large number of the nation's poor.

But while poverty is pervasive among women and children, those with little schooling, and blacks, two-thirds of all this country's poor, contrary to popular belief are white, the majority are adults, and half of all poor families are headed by men.

Many men with low incomes frequently work at least part-time, but often fail to make enough to adequately support their families. When the economy begins to expand more vigorously again, those who have the ability and the opportunity to work will be the quickest to improve their lot. But this makes further gains more difficult since more of those trapped in the poverty cycle will represent the hard core of the problem—women and children. Poverty has become as much a social as an economic issue.


The Poor
The Incidence of Poverty, 1985
Proportion of Each Group Below Poverty Level
The Profile of Poverty, 1985

# INCOME & ASSETS

*"A heavy purse makes a light heart."*

16th Century Proverb

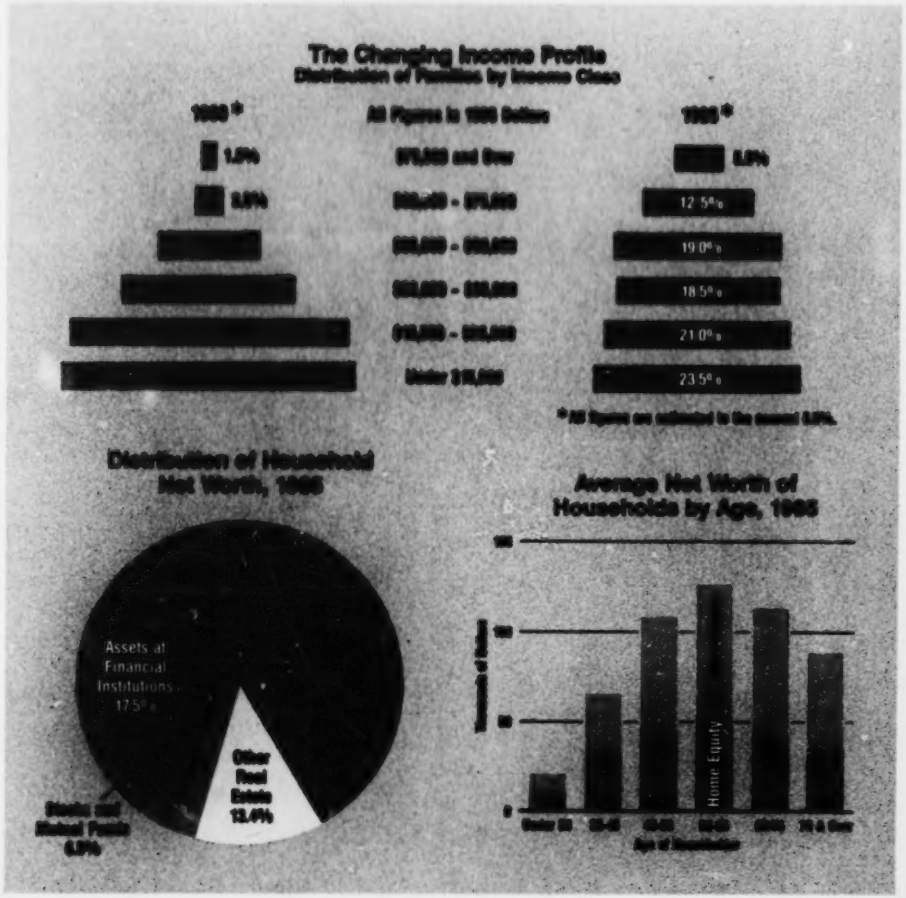
The growth of a large and prosperous middle class in the years since World War II has profoundly transformed the quality of American life. After almost two decades of little or no progress, the U.S. entered an era of extraordinary economic expansion. Each year, except for the intermittent recession, many hundreds of thousands of families rose from the lower to the middle income brackets and many from the middle to even more affluence. In 1950, based on today's dollars, about 15% of all families had incomes of $25,000 to $50,000. By 1960, the figure exceeded 30 percent. Today, it is substantially over 35%, while in addition, almost 20% of all families have income in excess of $50,000. Only 5% of homes were in that upper bracket in 1960.

Productivity was a powerful propellant contributing to a steady and sturdy rise in real wages. At the same time, millions of well paying managerial and professional jobs were created as business became more complex and sophisticated. White collar employment, paying relatively high wages, grew much faster than blue collar jobs.

More than anything, however, the expansion of America's middle class was driven by the surge of wives into the labor force. Well over half of all wives work, elevating millions of families into the middle and higher brackets. This has also made for a middle class which is less elitist than in the past.

Higher earnings have also generated a large increase in family assets. Over the past thirty-five years, the aggregate net worth of U.S. households tripled. While holdings are widely diversified, the single most important family asset owned in America today is the home.

Recently, the middle class has been growing more slowly than the household population. A major restraint has been slower economic growth. Further, there was a sharp influx of young adults into the labor force at modest starting wages. But now, with the baby boom generation maturing into more rewarding jobs, we can expect the middle class to grow more rapidly again.


The Changing Income Profile
1995*
12.5%
19.0%
18.5%
21.0%
23.5%
*All figures are estimated to the nearest 0.5%.
Distribution of Household Net Worth, 1995
Assets at Financial Institutions 17.5%
Other Real Estate 13.4%
Average Net Worth of Households by Age, 1995
Home Equity

# *LIVING STANDARDS*

*"Life consists in wanting something."*

Anonymous

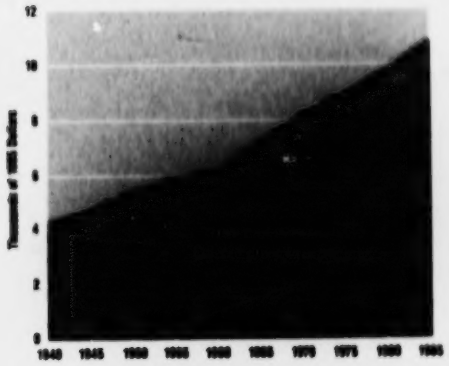
The most ardent Utopian at the turn of this century could not dream of the affluence and quality of life in today's America. Every decade our living standards advance by more than one-fifth. In the past thirty-five years, the goods and services consumed by the average American have doubled. In 1915, it took about 60 cents of a household's dollar just to buy the basic necessities of life—food, clothing and shelter. This has declined to 45 cents. Today, we are able to buy a better quality of necessities and still have substantially more money left over for an abundance of conveniences and luxuries.

Although the country still has stubborn pockets of economic distress, affluence has become widespread. About 40% of all American households now own two or more automobiles, up from 15% only about twenty-five years ago. The leap in living standards is further reflected in our almost universal telephone service. As late as 1950, two out of every five of the nation's homes were without a phone.

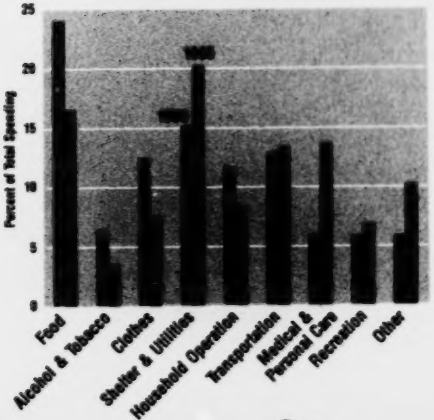
The cornucopia of products available to almost all of us today, suggests the prosperity and diversity of our lives. Last year alone, shipments to the nation's retailers included 9 million microwave ovens, 14 million electric coffee makers, 21 million television sets, 7 million VCR's, 98 million blank video cassettes, 28 million portable tape players, 19 million hair dryers and 20 million home security devices.

But while we live in an era of incredible affluence, there have been changes in relatively recent times which are detracting from the quality of our social environment. Drugs and crime, and especially the fear of crime, have become severe strains on the country's social fabric. It is a harsh fact, too, that more than half of all people arrested are under the age of 25. However, the number of young adults—which advanced so rapidly during the 1970's and early 80's—is now beginning to fall because of the abrupt drop in births after 1960. A decline in the crime rate has already begun.

## The Rising Standard of Living

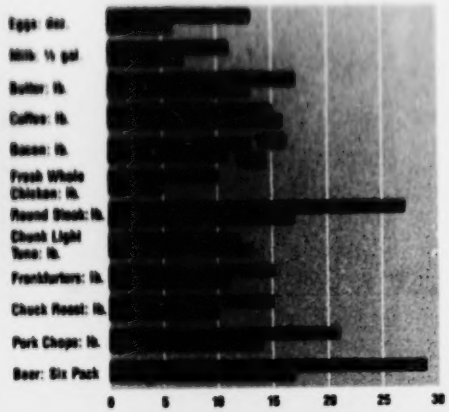



## The Changing Family Budget

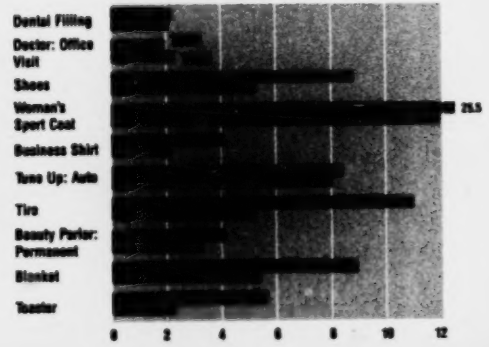



## The Worktime Needed to Earn The Price of Selected Items

### Worktime Needed in Minutes




### Worktime Needed in Hours



# *LEISURE*

*"Increased means and increased leisure are the two civilizers of man."*

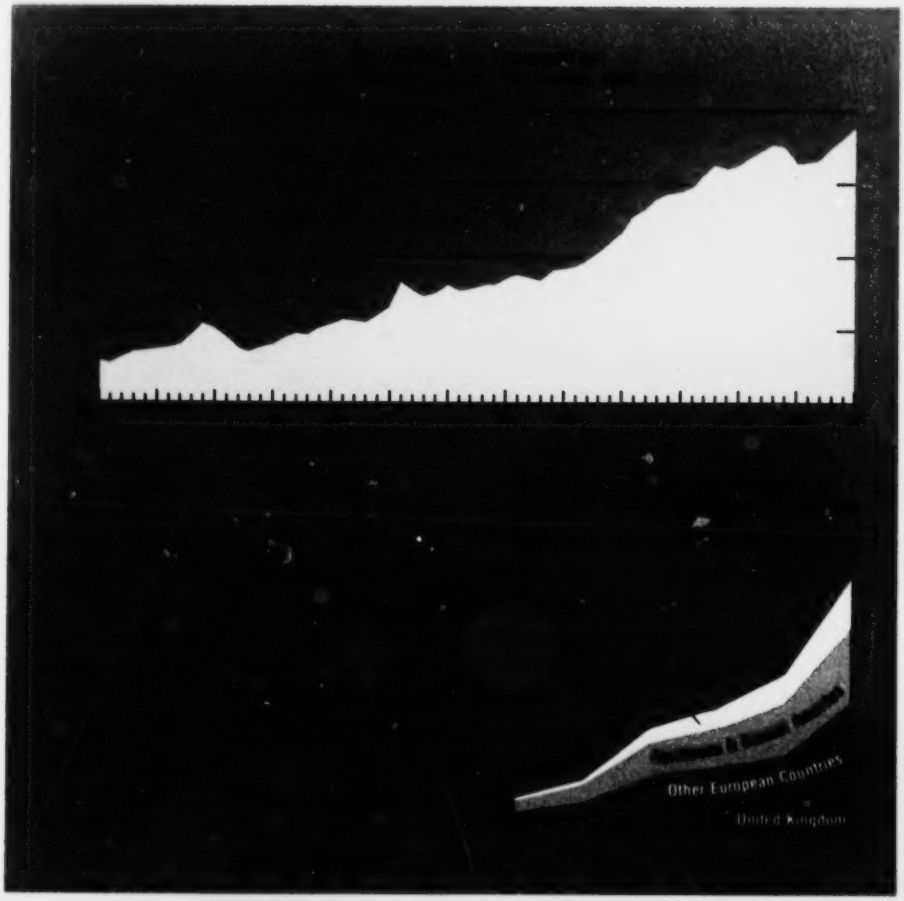
Benjamin Disraeli

For millions of Americans, recreation has become not simply an option on the way to the Good Life but a vital ingredient in good health. Many activities that were once the exclusive preserve of the elite—golf, tennis, sailing and skiing—have become mass growth industries. The number of visitors to national parks and similar recreational places has increased over four times in the past 25 years. Paid attendance at major-league baseball, basketball and football games has also soared. The great electronic revolution has brought TV and other entertainment into just about every living room in the U.S.

Four crucial factors have made for the extraordinary increase in our recreational activity—the shorter workweek, more holidays, more vacations, and most particularly, escalating earnings. Earlier this century, the few hours of leisure granted to workers was needed for rest since most people worked long hours at physically demanding jobs. Today, we are working fewer hours, and paid vacations are enjoyed by most workers. Many wage earners have annual vacations of three weeks and more. These trends have made tourism one of the nation's largest and fastest-growing industries. Americans traveling in the U.S. are now spending well over $200 billion a year for food, lodging, transportation, recreation and other goods and services.

While few Americans in past eras wandered very far from their place of birth, an ever-growing number of people today have become world travellers. In the early 1960's, three million people travelled overseas each year; today, the figure exceeds twelve million.

The nation's spending for recreation, adjusted for inflation, has doubled in the past two decades. Per capita expenditures are now some five times greater than in the "roaring" 1920's. More money, more leisure and the pursuit of fun and travel have enormously enriched the way we live.


Other European Countries
United Kingdom

# Changing America

## A Statistical Profile

| | 1915 | 1950 | 1985 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Population (millions) | 100.5 | 151.9 | 238.3 |
| Under age 18 | 37.5% | 31.0% | 26.3% |
| 18-65 | 58.0% | 60.9% | 61.7% |
| 65 and over | 4.5% | 8.1% | 12.0% |
| Births per 1,000 women age 15-44 | 125 | 106 | 66 |
| Births to unmarried women as % of all births | n.a. | 4.0% | 20.0% |
| White women | n.a. | 1.7% | 13.5% |
| Black women | n.a. | 18.1% | 58.5% |
| Infant mortality per 1,000 births | 99 | 29 | 11 |
| Total life expectancy at age 20* | 65 | 72 | 76 |
| Health expenditures as % of GNP | n.a. | 4.3% | 10.6% |
| Households (millions)* | 22.6 | 43.6 | 86.8 |
| Husband-wife families* | 80.2% | 79.1% | 59.3% |
| Single persons* | 6.5% | 9.1% | 23.7% |
| Other households* | 13.3% | 11.8% | 17.0% |
| Average household size (persons)* | 4.4 | 3.4 | 2.7 |
| Homeownership, % of all married couples* | 46.0% | 54.8% | 77.6% |

*1915 figure: estimate based on census data for 1910 and 1920. •1950 figure: estimated.

n.a.: not available.

| | *All dollar figures are in 1985 dollars* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **1915** | **1950** | **1985** |
| Gross national product, total (billions of dollars) | $468 | $1,345 | $3,998 |
| Gross national product, per capita | $4,660 | $8,855 | $16,777 |
| Productivity: index of output/man-hour | 100 | 227 | 490 |
| Average weekly hours: mfg. workers | 49.4 | 40.5 | 40.5 |
| Average hourly wages: mfg. workers | $2.44 | $6.13 | $9.53 |
| Average annual family income | n.a. | $17,125 | $32,944 |
| Percent with under $5,000: All families* | n.a. | 13.0% | 4.8% |
| Families age 65 and over* | n.a. | 35.0% | 2.9% |
| Black families* | n.a. | 33.5% | 13.5% |
| Percent of all families with over $50,000* | n.a. | 2.0% | 18.2% |
| Personal net worth, per capita | n.a. | $27,021 | $53,357 |
| Personal consumption expenditures, per capita | $3,520 | $5,381 | $10,811 |
| Percent spent for food + clothing + shelter | 60.0% | 51.5% | 44.2% |
| Farm workers (millions) | 13.6 | 9.9 | 3.6 |
| Number of persons in U.S. per farmer | 7.4 | 15.3 | 66.3 |
| Persons employed: non-farm (millions) | 25.3 | 51.8 | 103.2 |
| White collar workers* | 32.7% | 41.5% | 53.7% |
| Blue collar workers* | 55.2% | 46.6% | 32.6% |
| Service workers* | 12.1% | 11.9% | 13.7% |

## Statistical Profile—continued

| | 1915 | 1950 | 1985 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Women in the labor force (millions)* | 8.0 | 18.4 | 51.1 |
| Percent of women age 16-64 working* | 25.0% | 36.9% | 64.1% |
| Women as percent of total labor force* | 20.5% | 28.8% | 43.6% |
| Persons graduating HS as % all persons age 17 | 12.8% | 56.0% | 72.0% |
| Persons graduating college as % all persons age 23 | 2.3% | 18.2% | 31.2% |
| Women, as % of all persons enrolled in college | n.a. | 31.6% | 51.7% |
| Blacks, as % of all persons enrolled in college | n.a. | 5.0% | 10.2% |

*1915 figure: estimate based on census data for 1910 and 1920. •1950 figure: estimated.

n.a.: not available.

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